

RECENT N.T. RECORD OF RED-NECKED PHALAROPE

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On 10 February 1987, at about 18:30, a Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* was observed wading and feeding in shallow water on a tidal mudflat adjacent to mangroves at Palmerston (12° 32'S 130° 57'E) near Darwin. The bird was first noticed from a distance of about 70 metres and was eventually approached to within about eight metres.

The bird's overall appearance was of a strikingly white wader with patchy grey upperparts and a bold blackish patch around the eye. Compared with nearby Red-necked Stints *Calidris ruficollis*, it was, in the fairly hunched posture it consistently maintained, about the same height but distinctly heavier and longer-bodied. Its legs were blackish and short, giving it a noticeably horizontal appearance. Its bill was black, needle-like, and approximately equal to the length of its head. Its crown, back and wings were mottled grey. From the hindcrown a dark area extended down the back of the neck, almost appearing as a 'mane'. The entire underparts were white. In flight the bird showed a distinct wingbar and had white sides to the dark rump. The phalarope was heard to give a 'twick' call several times.

The phalarope was also seen by myself and other observers on 11 February feeding in the same spot and on 15 February swimming in an adjacent sewerage pond.

Except for a record at Alice Springs Sewerage Ponds in 1983 (Percival 1984), the Red-necked Phalarope has only been recorded in the Northern Territory in 1974, when there were several records, including a specimen, from near Darwin (McKean *et al.* 1975).

References

- McKEAN J.L., M.C. BARTLETT and C.M. PERRINS. 1975. New records from the Northern Territory. *Aust. Bird Watcher* 6: 45-6
- PERCIVAL, D. 1984. Letter to the Editor. *N.T. Naturalist* 7:3